

RHODE ISLAND STATE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

17 Smith Avenue, Greenville, RI 02828

401-949-1480

MEETING MINUTES

August 12, 2010

9:00 AM

USDA/NRCS Conference Room

Chair Eric Offenberg called the meeting to order at 9:00.

Present: Eric Offenberg, Chair; Walter Elwell, Emerson Wildes, ERICD; Paul Dolan, Gina DeMarco, Liz Berg, NRICD; Clarkson Collins, Doug McGovern, SRICD; Dick Went, RIACD; Kristen Castrataro, URI Coop Extension; Ramona LeBlanc, SCC.

Liz Berg made a presentation which highlighted the ongoing Ag Inventory/Bio-security project NRICD has been conducting through agreements with RI DEM and NRCS.

I. Minutes

A motion was made to accept the June 23 minutes: Paul/Emerson: unanimous.

II. Financial Reports

**A motion was made to acknowledge receipt of the financial reports:
Paul/Emerson: no discussion.**

III. Old Business

A. FFOS

An FFOS workshop for tax assessors will be held in September in conjunction with an election meeting of the RI Association of Assessing Officers. The development and presentation of the workshop will be funded by a SARE grant with the support of RI RDC and URI Cooperative Extension.

The revised Citizens Guide will need to be available by the date of the workshop. Ramona will confirm that with Ken Ayars.

B. Grants

Another grant from the RI Foundation, which was being sought to fund the development of strategic plans for the CD's, is doubtful as grants have been received in each of the last two years.

A small grant from Innovative Solutions will be sought to complete the file consolidation. Ramona will develop an outline/budget.

Dick reported that NCDEA has some funding available for strategic planning. Ramona will pursue.

C. Energy Audits

Liz and Doug will participate in a 3 day training to learn how to collect and enter data to be used in the development of energy plans for farms. NRCS is sponsoring this pilot program to determine the level of interest. Practices will be determined by need. Liz and Doug will meet with clients to get contracts signed.

D. SE&SC Handbook

RC & D is waiting for an agreement to be signed by NRCS to fund the revision,

E. WHIP Forestry Initiative Agreement

29 applications were received and of those, 25 were funded with a total of approximately \$ 380,000 being obligated. Liz and Doug will meet with clients to get contracts signed.

IV. New Business

A. Geese Abatement

NRCS approached RIACD and URI Cooperative Extension to discuss development of a geese abatement program aimed at agricultural lands in RI. Current discussion is focusing on a protocol developed by GeesePeace and a regional approach extending into Eastern Connecticut and SE Massachusetts. The president of GeesePeace is meeting with small group on 8/16. The CD's role would be to coordinate program. Education and outreach component would likely

include a series of workshops. Practices on farms would likely be paid for by farmers on a cost share basis. Concern was expressed about possible negative PR on implementation of protocol.

The CD's will concentrate on the E/O at present.

B. New SCC Contracts in Core Programs

The new policy continues to evolve, but the goal of having the SCC administer core programs is consistency of implementation statewide. It has been proposed that new contracts, which are written through SCC, would be paid to CD's by the tasks that those CD's complete. If there is a 15% indirect line item, that 15% would be split between the SCC and the CD completing to work (10% SCC and 5% CD). 10% of contract without indirect payment would remain with SCC to help offset overhead expenses, thereby reducing burden to CD's. This policy can be evaluated on a yearly basis to ensure that it is serving to help CD's strengthen and develop internal programs while maintaining an equitable balance between the CD's.

C. Directors' Payments

Enabling legislation stipulates \$25.00 per Board meeting, but each CD is managing differently. Eric asked that each Board, before the next year's budget is set, consider adopted the recommended stipend for a statewide level of consistency.

D. Bonding Insurance

A second signature on checks over \$500 was required by insurance

company to get the required policy. With difficulty of having both Paul and Eric sign each check, the question of having Ramona added to account as signatory for those checks that do require a second signature was raised. Accountant will be consulted to see if there is an issue with that.

V. Reports

A. RIACD: Dick reported that NRCS matches state funding in some states. He will pursue with Phou.

VI. Other

Agenda items for next meeting to include:

FFOS update

Financial review of each CD, including Budget YTD and balance sheet

Next meeting date 10/13 at 9:15